

Exercise #1: Visioning Exercise – “Cover Story”

The purpose of this exercise is to identify a vision for the future of the Wrightsville Sound community. To do this, participants were asked to create a “cover story” for a magazine that might be written about their community 20 years in the future. Participants were asked to imagine that it’s the year 2030. As they are the checkout line at the grocery store, they see a copy of one of their favorite magazines. Then, on the cover of one, they notice a big headline about their community. It was then their job, as a group, to create that “cover story” along with its other elements including the featured articles, side bars, quotes, and photos. The results of this exercise will serve as the basis for the vision statement of the small area plan.

GROUP #1

Cover Story: “Wrightsville Sound: A Sense of Place”

Featured Articles:

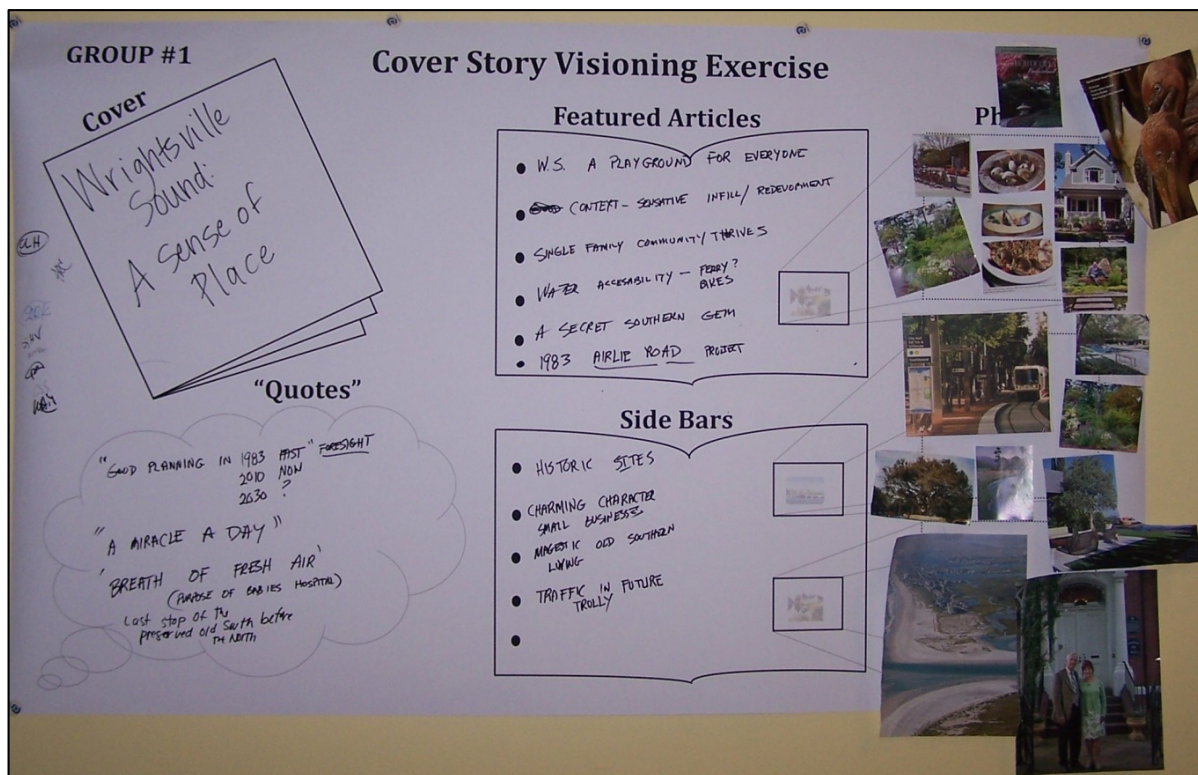
- Wrightsville Sound: A playground for everyone
- Context sensitive infill and redevelopment
- Single-family community thrives
- Water accessibility – by ferry and bike
- A secret southern gem
- 1983 Airlie Road project revisited

Side Bars:

- Historic sites
- Charming character, small businesses
- Majestic old southern living
- Traffic in future trolley

Quotes:

- “Good planning in 1983 offers foresight”
- “A miracle a day”
- “Breath of fresh air” (Babies Hospital)
- “Last stop of the preserved old south before the north”



GROUP #2

Cover Story: "Wrightsville Sound: A Southern Secret"

Featured Articles:

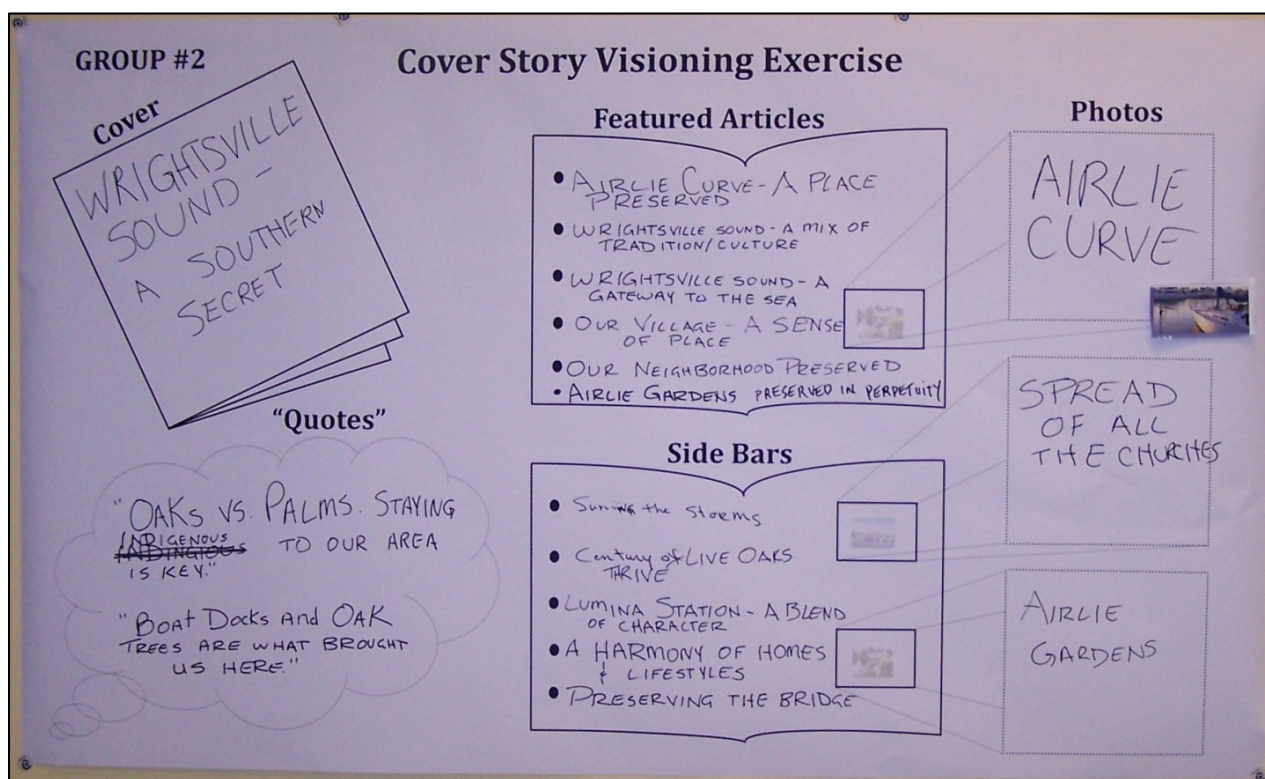
- Airlie Curve – A Place Preserved
- Wrightsville Sound: A mix of tradition and culture
- Wrightsville Sound: A gateway to the sea
- Our Village – A Sense of Place
- Our Neighborhood Preserved
- Airlie Gardens preserved in perpetuity

Side Bars:

- Surviving the storms
- Century of thriving live oaks
- Lumina Station: A blend of character
- A harmony of homes and lifestyles
- Preserving the bridge

Quotes:

- "Oaks versus palms, staying indigenous to our area is key."
- "Boat docks and oak trees are what brought us here."



GROUP #3

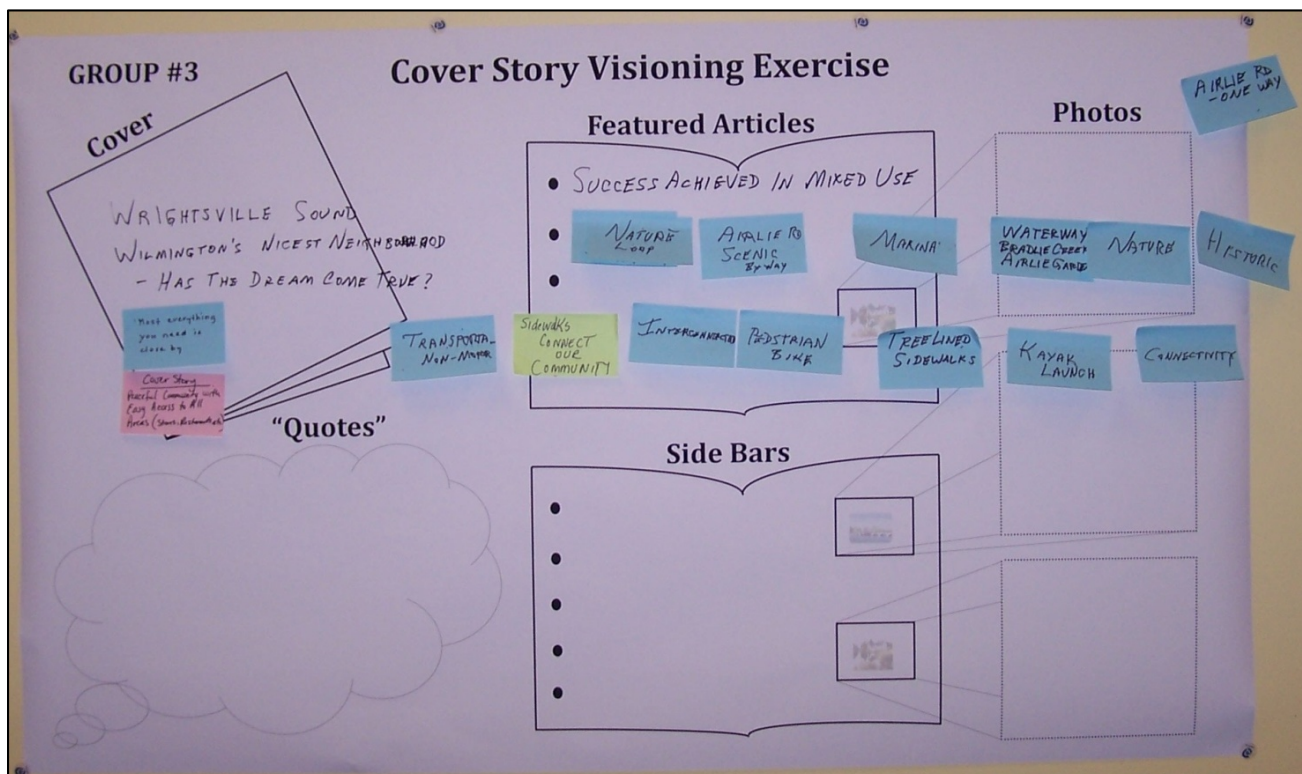
Cover Story: "Wrightsville Sound: Wilmington's Nicest Neighborhood – Has the Dream Come True?"

Featured Articles:

- Success achieved in mixed use
- Nature loop
- Airlie Road Scenic Byway
- Marina
- Sidewalks connect our community
- Interconnected
- Transportation non-motorized

Side Bars:

- Waterway, Bradley Creek, Airlie Gardens
- Nature
- Historic
- Airlie Road one-way
- Kayak launch
- Connectivity



GROUP #4

Cover Story: "Wrightsville Sound: Small Town Charm within the City"

Featured**Articles:**

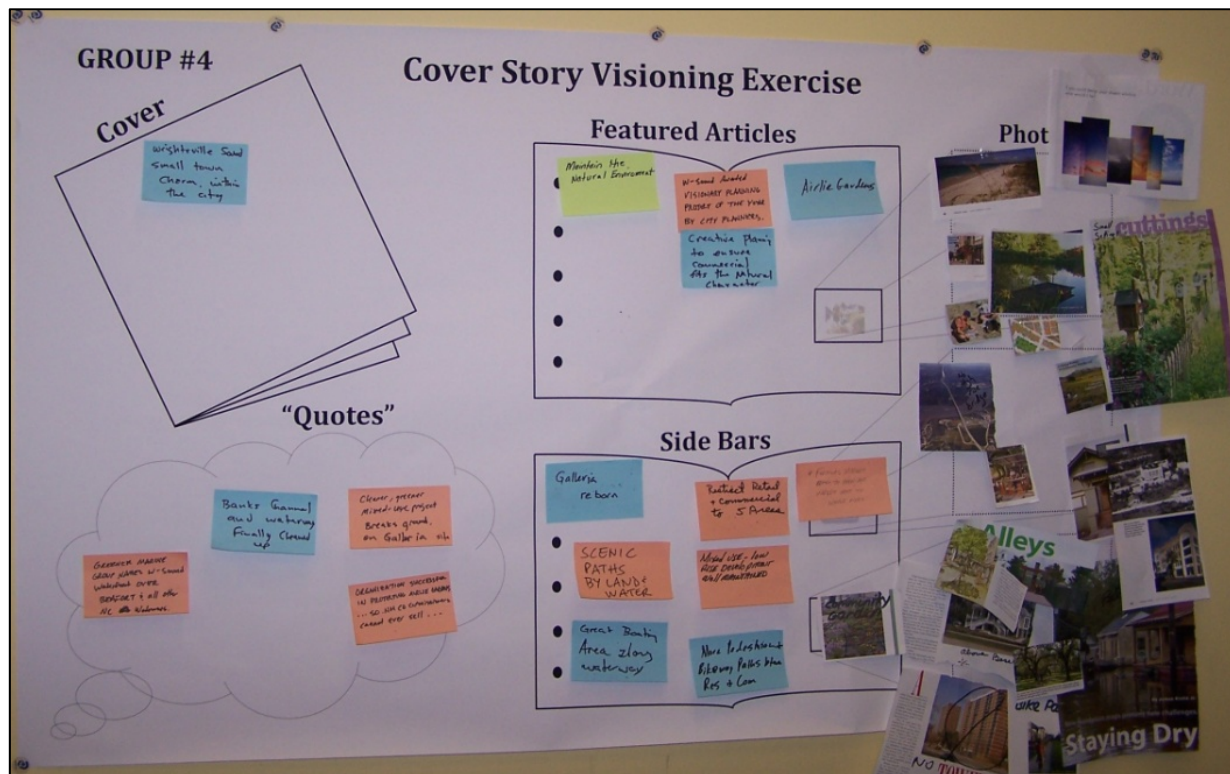
- Maintain the natural environment
- Wrightsville Sound awarded visionary planning project of the year by city planners
- Creative planning to ensure commercial fits the natural character
- Airlie Gardens

Side Bars:

- Galleria reborn
- Scenic paths by land and water
- Great boating area along waterway
- Restrict retail and commercial to 5 areas
- Mixed-use low-rise development maintained
- More pedestrian and bikeway paths between residential and commercial
- Farmer's market to open next to "Whole Foods"

Quotes:

- "Greener marine group names Wrightsville Sound waterfront over Beaufort and all other NC waterways."
- "Banks Channel and waterway finally cleaned up."
- "Cleaner, greener mixed-use project breaks ground on Galleria site."
- "Organization successful in protecting Airlie Gardens so NHC commissioners can never sell."



Exercise #2: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a planning tool that is used to identify a community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that either assist or inhibit a community in achieving their desired future. Participants were asked to identify community strengths that make their community great, weaknesses that detract from their community, opportunities that their community has to improve and threats that may inhibit their community from improving in the future. The results of this exercise will serve as the basis for the community's goals.

GROUP #1

Strengths:

- Balance, quality of life, beauty of environment/nature
- Peaceful, tranquility, quaint, small, simple
- Wildlife preservation
- Access to water and beach
- Preserve zoning classification (R-20)

Weaknesses:

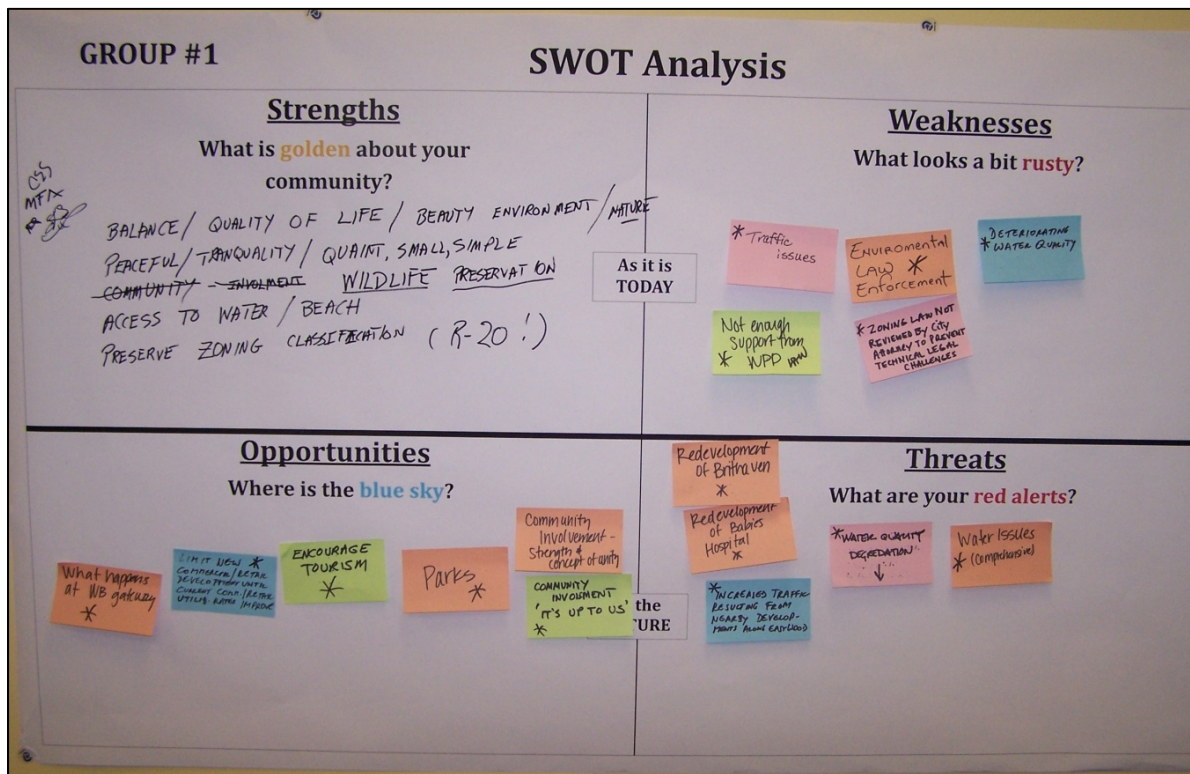
- Traffic issues
- Environmental law enforcement
- Deteriorating water quality
- Not enough support from Wilmington Police Department
- Zoning law not reviewed by City Attorney to prevent technical legal challenges

Opportunities:

- What happens at Wrightsville Beach gateway
- Limit new commercial and retail development until current commercial and retail utility rates improve
- Encourage tourism
- Parks
- Community involvement – strength and concept of unity
- Community involvement – it is up to us

Threats:

- Redevelopment of Brithaven
- Redevelopment of Babies Hospital
- Increased traffic as a result of nearby developments along Eastwood Road
- Water quality degradation
- Water issues (comprehensive)



GROUP #2

Strengths:

- Access to the water
- Neighborhood amenities and diversity
- Beauty of the area (natural resources, etc)
- Historic resources
- Low-key sense of pride

Opportunities:

- Dirt roads are paved
- Improved regulatory environment (zoning, building heights, signage, environment); Review 1983 plan
- Historic preservation
- Revisit neighborhood organization
- Farmers' market; voluntary agricultural district

Weaknesses:

- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Traffic congestion
- Flooding
- Condition of roadways (Allens Lane not paved)
- Parking at the Airlie curve
- Lack of planning and zoning to preserve Airlie views

Threats:

- Over-reaching regulatory environment
- Height, density and over-development
- Traffic (Summer Rest and Airlie roads)
- Palm trees
- High-rise bridge

GROUP #2 SWOT Analysis	
<p>Strengths What is golden about your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the water • Neighborhood Amenities/diversity • Beauty of the AREA (Nat. Resources, etc) • Historic Resources • Low Key sense of pride 	<p>Weaknesses What looks a bit rusty?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACK of Pedestrian/Bike facilities • Traffic congestion • Flooding • Condition of Roadways (Allen's not paved) • PARKING at the Airlie Curve • LACK of plan & zoning to preserve Airlie Views
<p>Opportunities Where is the blue sky?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirt Roads are paved • Improved Regulatory environment (zoning, building heights, signage, environment) → Review 1983 plan • Historic preservation • Revisit Neighborhood organization • Farmer's market/voluntary agricultural district 	<p>Threats What are your red alerts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OVER REACHING regulatory environment • Height, density and over-development • Traffic (Summer Rest & Airlie) • Palm Trees • High-rise bridge

GROUP #3

Strengths:

- Vibrant mix of commercial, residential, historic and natural
- Proximity to waterway, Wrightsville Beach, Bradley Creek
- Airlie Gardens

Opportunities:

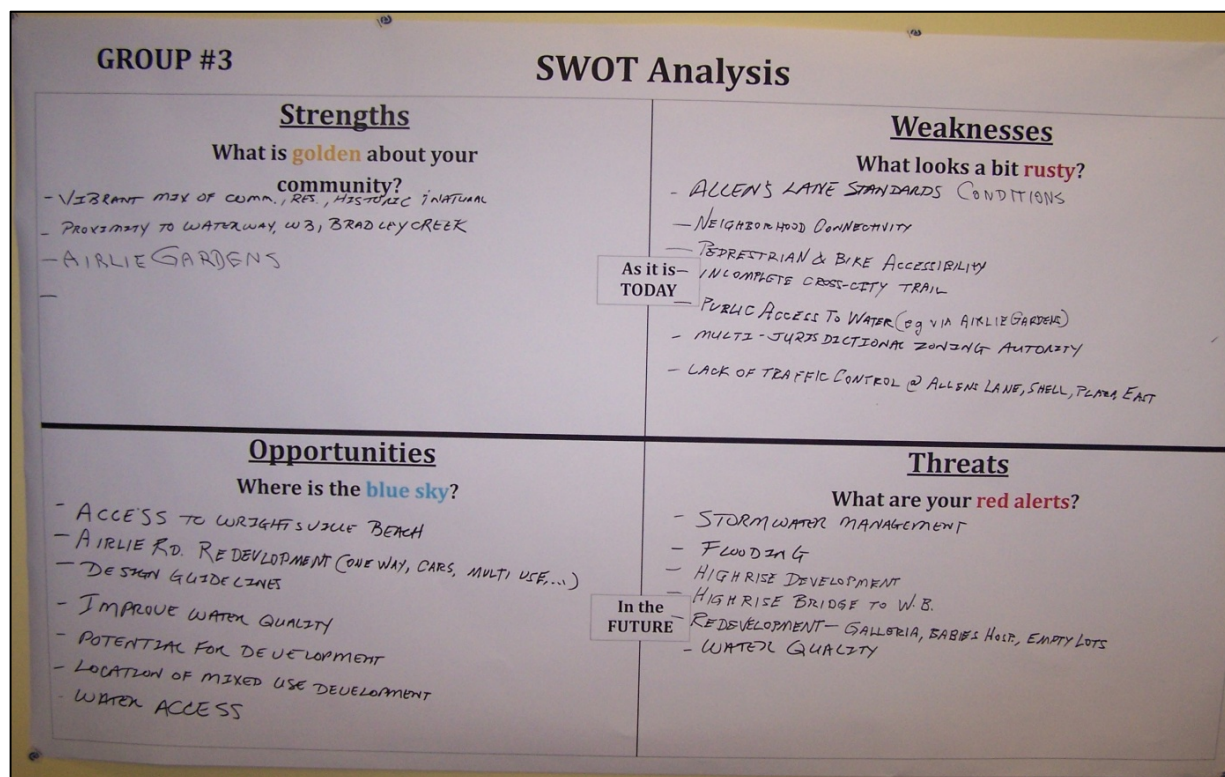
- Access to Wrightsville Beach
- Airlie Road redevelopment (one-way, cars, multi-use path)
- Design guidelines
- Improve water quality
- Potential for redevelopment
- Location of mixed use development
- Water access

Weaknesses:

- Allens Lane standards, conditions
- Neighborhood connectivity
- Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility
- Incomplete cross-city trail
- Public access to water (e.g. via Airlie Gardens)
- Multi-jurisdictional zoning authority
- Lack of traffic control at Allens Lane, Shell Station, Lumina Commons

Threats:

- Stormwater management
- Flooding
- High-rise development
- High-rise bridge to Wrightsville Beach
- Redevelopment – Galleria, Babies Hospital, empty lots
- Water quality



GROUP #4

Strengths:

- Waterways
- Green space; Airlie Gardens
- Trees and wildlife (birds, squirrels, insects, etc)
- Self contained; close proximity
- Current commercial, self contained
- Proximity, access
- Easy access to shops, grocery, restaurants (within walking and biking distance)
- Low-density

Opportunities:

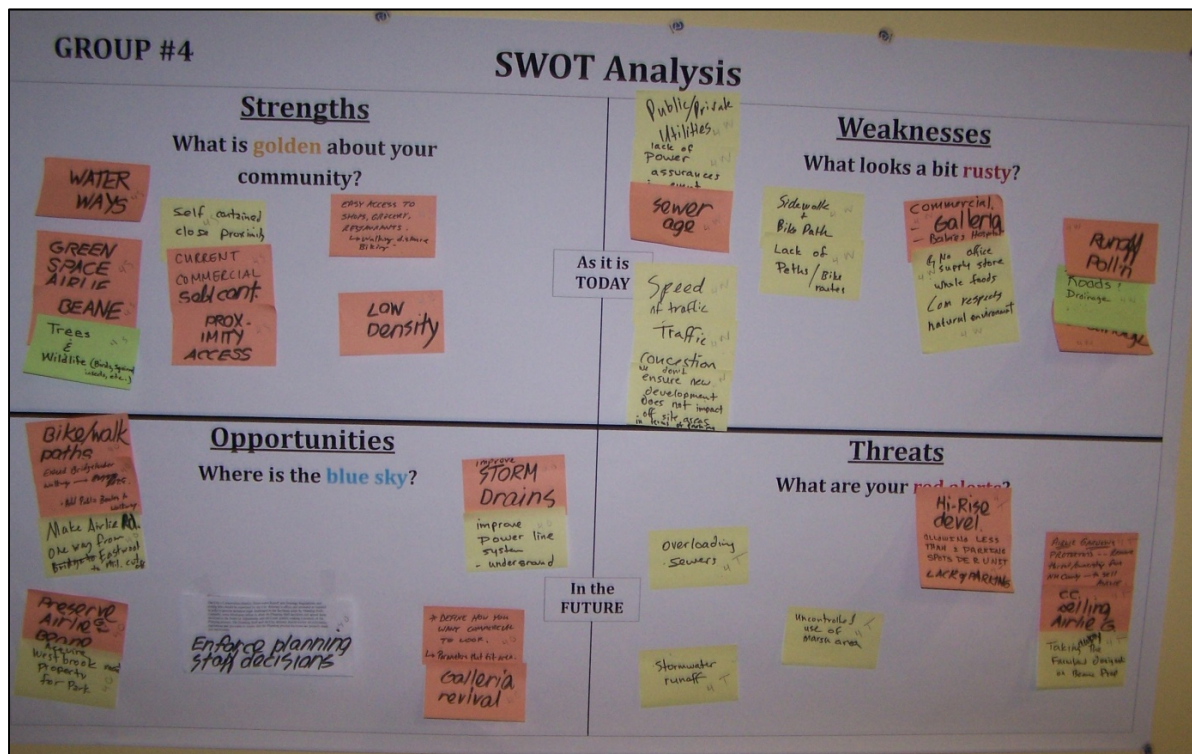
- Bicycle and walking paths
- Extend Bridge Tender walkway, add public benches to walkway
- Make Airlie Road one-way from Eastwood Road to Military Cutoff Road
- Preserve Airlie Gardens and Oak Point Farms
- Acquire vacant Westbrook property for park
- Improve storm drains
- Improve power system, underground
- Define how you want commercial to look, parameters that fit area
- Galleria revival
- Enforce planning staff decision

Weaknesses:

- Public and private utilities
- Lack of power assurances in event of disaster
- Age of sewer
- Speed of traffic
- Traffic congestion
- We do not ensure new development does not impact off-site areas in terms of parking
- Lack of sidewalks and bike paths
- Commercial: Galleria, Babies Hospital; no office supply store, Whole Foods; commercial respecting natural environment
- Runoff pollution
- Roads and drainage

Threats:

- Overloading sewers
- Stormwater runoff
- Uncontrolled use of marsh area
- High-rise development
- Allowing less than 2 parking spots per unit, lack of parking
- Airlie Gardens protected – remove threat/ownership from New Hanover County to sell
- Taking away farmland designation from Oak Point Farms property



Additional Ideas

Exercise #1: Visioning Exercise – “Cover Story”

Group 1

- Protect water quality
- No modern buildings
- More like Lumina Station or southern style
- Protect single-family areas
- Maintain existing commercial
- The area is quiet and scenic
- City solves transportation problems by enabling electric car service to beach
- Maintain southern lifestyle
- Clean water
- Not like Myrtle Beach
- Old southern Wilmington oaks not palms
- No high-rise buildings
- Bring back trolley system
- Multi-function, multi-use, services within walking distance
- No more commercial areas
- More like Palm Beach downtown area
- Solution for traffic to beach
- Accessibility to water, places to fish and launch kayaks
- Preserve and improve water quality
- Improve infrastructure, control growth, limit height
- Need height restrictions
- Accessibility to shops and restaurants
- Historic churches
- Total area concept
- Waterways preserved from over-development
- Historic water oaks thrive in Wrightsville Sound
- Preserve our way of life
- Small businesses in character of Lumina Station, not modern

Group 2

- Pave Allens Lane
- Wrightsville Sound is a diversity of neighborhoods blending tradition and culture
- Old neighborhood retains character and withstands real estate pressure for high-rise development
- Pedestrian friendly village
- Wrightsville Sound: Wilmington’s “other” waterfront
- Protect the history of the area, business and industry, and churches
- Value connecting with nature
- Keep community safe and protect its natural beauty
- Maintain natural and open space, preserve integrity of water quality on sound
- Diversity alive and well on Wrightsville Sound
- Park space in Wrightsville Sound is small, but striking
- Airlie curve remains the same
- No change – we have a wonderful neighborhood

- Wrightsville Sound becomes model of suburban and urban blending
- Existing mix of uses supports each other
- History alive on Wrightsville Sound
- A history of working together
- The waterway is our watery backyard

Group 3

- Pedestrian and bike facilities are important
- Airlie road is a gateway to nature
- Car should be optional
- Speed limit reduced on Airlie Road
- Maintain plenty of shade trees
- Should be able to walk and bike anywhere in area
- Should be able to satisfy all minor needs for shopping, etc
- Need places to meet others
- Keep neighborhood safe
- Keep things within walking distance
- Keep it like it is
- Nature preserved in convenience setting
- Need integrated residential service shops
- Mixed-use
- Should be a mixed-use area that is bike and pedestrian friendly

Group 4

- A big city that has held on to small town charm
- Maintain pristine waterway
- Pave streets
- Preserve the hardwood
- City paves streets
- Uncongested streets
- Extension of nostalgic beach and family community
- A small neighborhood feeling within its natural setting
- The character of Wrightsville Sound welcomes you to Wrightsville Beach
- Best recreational waterways – clean water, good for boaters
- Great water recreation
- Wrightsville Sound has best waterway on eastern seaboard
- Wrightsville Sound area awarded for mixed-use planning

Exercise #2: SWOT Analysis***Strengths***Group 1

- Small scale, good trees
- Quality of life
- Community unity, involvement to stop development
- Everything in arm's reach, good balance
- Tranquility, character

Group 2

- Neighborhood feeling
- Waterways
- Restaurants and shops
- St Andrew's On-the-Sound
- Trails
- Variety of resources throughout village neighborhood
- Flora and fauna
- Good blend of residential and commercial interests
- Sense of pride in owners and residents
- Airlie Gardens
- Oak Point Farms
- Mature live oaks
- Scenic byway
- Near marinas and boat facilities
- Beauty
- Availability of services (shopping, recreation, etc)
- Public gardens
- Water views
- Clean water
- Airlie is a historic road
- Majestic trees
- Safety
- Fishing
- Size
- Variety of services, retail and restaurants
- Airlie Road; historic treasures
- Diverse housing, culture, commercial, population
- Beauty of area
- Convenience through neighborhood

Group 3

- Lots of water
- Lots of trees
- Most needs nearby
- Can walk most places
- Lovely homes
- Lumina Station – excellent architecture for commercial
- Historic resources
- Beach
- Nature preserve
- Shops
- Close to beach and Intracoastal Waterway
- Live oaks
- Sidewalks and bike paths
- Bradley Creek and Intracoastal Waterway

- Quiet
- Natural
- Airlie Road
- Airlie Gardens
- Attractive development (e.g. Lumina Station, Raphaela's)

WeaknessesGroup 1

- Water runoff, flooding
- Lack of retail space utilization
- Zoning, environment, preservation
- Zoning law does not require sufficient parking in multi-family developments
- No consistency in signage
- Lack of bike paths, quality of current walkways to the beach
- Multi-family residential use should be prohibited in areas zoned R-15 and R-20
- Zero lot line developments should be prohibited in areas zoned R-15 and R-20
- Lack of open space, parks
- Unkempt open spaces
- Not taking action
- Lack of code and law enforcement
- Protection of existing zoning, zoning code loopholes

Group 2

- Bike lane infrastructure
- Transit connectivity to rest of county
- Military Cutoff Road congestion
- Traffic back up at Intracoastal Waterway bridge
- Crosswalks on Military Cutoff and Eastwood roads
- DOT area just west of bridge
- No sidewalk on Airlie Road
- Narrow stretch near sound under trees

Group 3

- Ignoring Military Cutoff Road, think access loop, traffic, water runoff
- Lack of connecting sidewalks
- Bicycle and pedestrian crossing at Eastwood and Military Cutoff roads
- Inadequate storm drainage
- Use of waterway
- Dangerous to bicycle on Airlie Road
- Airlie Road traffic
- Too much traffic
- Traffic, speed, access, intersections
- We need crosswalk signs

Group 4

- Don't enforce sign ordinance

Opportunities

Group 1

- Redevelopment of Babies Hospital site compatible with goals of Wrightsville Sound community
- Preservation of sensitive areas
- Redevelopment of Brithaven
- Galleria – opportunity for commercial and residential redevelopment
- Preservation of open vistas
- Comprehensive plan on how to manage increase in traffic resulting from Eastwood Road developments
- Comprehensive plan on how to improve and maintain water quality
- Establish an identity for the community
- Alternate use for current unused commercial space
- Possibility of traffic circles on Eastwood Road (like Mayfaire), less expensive than maintaining traffic lights
- Incentives to draw businesses and mixed-use developments
- Development with vision
- Create a zoning classification for property that would prohibit any development
- Determine how to attract more commercial retail use within existing space designated for retail and commercial

Group 2

- Low impact development to improve water quality and runoff (new development and retrofitting existing development)
- Control building heights
- Create historic district
- Preservation of the area
- Better roads
- Designate historic sites
- Continue and foster community involvement and common voice
- Designate all historic structures as such to protect them
- Zoning to protect what's good including density and height
- Change existing zoning for buildings blocking water view
- Paving dirt roads
- Review Airlie Road traffic patterns and options
- More interconnected waterfront

Group 3

- Expansion of boat ramp
- Kayak launch at Airlie Gardens
- Summer Rest trail connection
- Preservation of green space

- Lower speed limit on Wrightsville Avenue
- Litter control
- Continue cross-city trail
- Bike access to Airlie Gardens via cross-city trail
- Sidewalks at “downtown” Airlie Road
- Interconnected bicycle and walking trails
- Walking trails
- Accessible stores, offices (close at hand)
- Vibrant mix of commercial, residential, and natural

Group 4

- The city's conservation district, stormwater runoff and drainage regulations, and zoning laws should be examined by the City Attorney's Office, and amended as required in order to prevent technical legal challenges to the decisions made by planning staff. Currently, some developers refuse to abide by planning staff decisions and appeal those decisions to the Board of Adjustment, and the court system, making a mockery of the planning process. The planning staff and the City Attorney should review all ordinances, regulations, and processes to ensure that the planning process decisions are properly made and enforceable.
- Small trolley line connecting Galleria, Mayfaire, and Wrightsville Beach.

Threats

Group 1

- Too much vacant commercial space
- Commercial development of Babies Hospital site
- Overzealous law enforcement on water
- Zero lot line developments
- Weakness of commercial areas (tax revenue)
- Property taxes too high for small businesses

Group 2

- Traffic on Summer Rest and Airlie roads
- Potential high density
- Hurricanes
- Residential and commercial over development

Group 3

- Traffic
- High-rise bridge to Wrightsville Beach
- “We can't afford it”
- High-rise building at Eastwood Road or Galleria
- Commercial property Wrightsville Beach
- Undeveloped single-family lots
- Connectivity
- High-rise multi-family
- Density